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ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

THE SALE

The Sale consider themselves superior to the other artisan castes. Nowadays they no longer work on the basis of affiliation to the village agriculturists. According to an old informant, 'In the good old days when the Sale used to spin their thread in addition to weaving cloth, they also entered into a definite arrangement with the agriculturists, as most castes do to-day. They supplied us with a certain length of cloth every year, and in return we gave them some grain at each harvest. But now times have changed. They buy yarn manufactured in the mills, weave fancy cloth and sell it for cash.' The weavers have now practically abandoned the traditional system. Only with certain occupational castes do they arrive at a working arrangement under which, in return for their services, they give them an agreed length of cloth. In the course of our investigations we found that such arrangements existed between weavers on the one hand, and potters, barbers and washermen on the other.

THE GAONDLA

The villagers in this area are very fond of *sendi*, or fermented palm juice. The Gaondla shops are the centre of attraction in the evenings for men—young and old—as well as for many middle-aged and old women. This caste has the monopoly of tapping the different kinds of palm trees, and also of selling the fermented juice, and has admirably succeeded in maintaining it, notwithstanding the introduction of the system by which government leases trees to the highest bidders irrespective of their caste. In Shamirpet, so far, there has been no challenge to their monopoly; although occasionally the Madigas and other poor people steal juice from the pots tied to the trees by the Gaondlas. The Gaondlas first mark out the trees to be tapped, then actually tap them in the afternoons and evenings, and tie pots at the points where each tree has been tapped to collect the dripping juice. Early next morning they go round to these trees again, climb up, and bring back to the village all the juice collected during the night. This is kept by them in large earthen pots and retailed to customers on demand, expecially in the afternoon and in the evening. One of the Gaondla families in the village has a government contract for other liquors and intoxicants. In addition to the fermented palm juice, that shop also sells several other varieties of liquor obtained from distilleries

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427 zamindari tenant supplies two pairs of bulls, one-eighth goes to
241 the cultivator.

In the case of sugarcane, the cultivator gets 1½ shares and the zamindari tenant only one. If the sub-tenant cultivates on contract, the cultivator must give two maunds of jaggery for every 2½ cents of land planted with sugarcane.*

Of the agricultural families, all the males cultivate some land and also work for hire. There are two females, however, who do not cultivate, of whom one lives on charity and the other by working as a coolie.

[423] Of the lands which are called "Sirkar" there is only one kind of ownership and holders of such land are called pattadars.

As regards lands designated "inam" lands there are slight differences. The inamdars pay, instead of the full rent, what are called quit-rents and road-cess.

463 There are five villagers who combine agriculture with other occupations. One is a blacksmith, the other a potter, the third prepares combs, and two others are dhobis. The sub-tenants mentioned above also do the work of coolies between harvest and sowing time.

243 *Agriculture.*—All dry lands yield only one crop per annum. Wet lands yield two crops. No land yields three crops.

For millets and pulses, the land is ploughed after a shower of rain when it is soft. Generally June or July is seed time. After a time when the plants sprout up the fields are weeded. After that four or five good showers of rain are needed. Then when the corn is ripe, it is cut and piled in bundles. The bundles are trod upon by bulls and the corn drops out.

For paddy the harvest time is November for the first crop, for which seed is sown in June or July; April and May for the second crop, for which seed is sown in December or January. When there is sufficient water the paddy fields are flooded with water and then ploughed till they become miry. Afterwards, green leaf manure (generally kanaga leaves) and animal manure are spread and well trodden in. Before planting paddy is steeped in cow-dung water in pots, which water is renewed every day. After four or five days the plants sprout up and then they are removed from the pots and placed in the prepared fields. After they are thus planted the fields are again flooded with water. But the water is allowed to remain for a day only. The next day it is let out and the fields are allowed to dry for three days when the plants are of some size. From that time onwards till the corn is ripe water is allowed to flow freely on the fields. When it is ripe it is harvested. Then it is cut, heaped in bundles, struck against a bed of rock when the grain falls out which is all collected and taken home.

• 249 *Sugarcane.*—The land is well ploughed, but unlike paddy is not made miry at first. Long trenches of comparatively little depth are made by means of the ploughshare. Then the field is well manured, and water is let in till it becomes miry. The sugarcane already cut in small pieces is planted in these trenches. No water is let in on that day. After an interval of three days water

[804] *[This must be taken to mean, not the Railway or Bengal maund of 82¾ lb., but a local maund of 26 lb. very nearly. The rent in jaggery is therefore nearly one ton per acre, worth about Rs. 150.—Ed.]

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249 is again let in once in three or four days. After a comparatively short space of time when the plants have grown, the heaps of earth separating the two rows of plants are made higher and broader. From that time onwards water is let in once in three or four days till the crop is full. After three months when the cane has grown, two or three stalks are bound together by means of its dried leaves. When the stalks are still higher once more they are tied together at the top. Then long rods with forked ends are planted in the ground and long bamboos are laid in a line with the trenches, resting in the forks and the canes are tied to them. In this way the binding goes on for about eight or nine months as the stalks grow longer and longer. When they are full they are cut and removed. The crop is carried about one year or a little more after the cultivator starts getting the land ready. The country wooden plough is used for all purposes, the other implements being yoke, picottah bucket made of leather and sometimes of iron, *yetham-bana*,* *palikimanu*, *guntaka*, *gorru*, *palikiguntaka*, *mamoti*, reaping hook, shorthandled hoes.

231 *Stock*—

Working oxen	45	including paracheri.
Oxen not in a fit condition to work ...	65	
Male buffaloes	6	
Cow buffaloes	15	
Young stock of above species up to a year old	59	
Horses	...	
Donkeys and mules	4	
Sheep	47	
Goats	8	
Pigs	18	
Cows	85	

The cattle are of the well-known Punganur breed, rather light, but quick and active. The villagers breed cattle, and buy and sell in the cattle fair held annually in Punganur.

241 *Manuring.*—Most of the dung, about 90 per cent, is used as manure, the rest being utilized for household purposes.

237] Cattle urine is allowed to run to waste. The dung of goats, sheep, pigs, donkeys is used as manure.

Except the leaf of the kanaga tree, no green manure is used. This is obtained from topes planted many years ago. Sometimes it is taken on contract from the zamindar from the jungle all round.

There are practically no gardens, all the lands being used to grow grain. It is only now that beginnings are being made. Small plots of land are being planted with mango-grafts. The karnam of the village started this.

242 *Insect-pests.*—*Thellachida* affects generally paddy crop, eats away the leaves and stalks.

782 *Pethachida* affects all crops; consists of innumerable kinds of insects, eating away all the leaves.

Aggijadyam.—Paddy turns a vivid scarlet.

Kondapurirogam.—The worst pest affecting rice. The whole crop is consumed as by fire. The long stalks get shrivelled up to a ridiculously small length. To get a crop is impossible when once this sets in.

Locusts.—These destroy the crops.

* Vide p. 105.

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Photo by Agricultural College.

SUGAR-CANE CRUSHING.

[facing p. 108]

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426 The result is that many families that were once rich are now reduced to absolute poverty. The rich few are becoming richer. But 65 to 75 per cent of the population are in debt. Of these 25 to 30 per cent have hopes of clearing it off in three or four years by mortgaging their lands. The rest, 35 to 40 per cent, are not able to escape easily out of debt. The pity is that these classes do not hesitate to contract debts at first, and then they are not in a hurry to return them soon, and small sums accumulate into large amounts.

438 *Trade.*—The villagers purchase commodities for industrial and
[543] agricultural purposes from weekly fairs held at Nidadavolu and
from Rajahmundry; for consumption, partly from weekly fairs
433 at Nidadavolu and partly from the local traders. The amount of village produce sold was approximately as follows:—

	1916-17.	1915-16.
Soap nuts	250 bags.	500 bags.
Horsegram	200 (or 250) bags.	400 "
Gingelly	220 bags.	850 "
Red gram (this is mostly retained for local use).	50-60 "	100 "
Bengal gram	25-30 "	100 "
Ghee	50 60 tins.	50-60 tins.
Cholam (this is retained for local use; no crop this year).	...	50 bags.
Black gram	20 bags.	12 "

249 *Jaggery trade.*—The most noteworthy feature of the village is
438 the jaggery trade, carried on during the summer season. Nearly half the field area of the village consists of dry sand, filled with palmyra trees. These trees are rented out to the toddy tappers, who have to pay from Rs. 15 to 20 each in rent. One man can draw toddy from about 60 trees. Some 1,000 to 1,200 of these tappers come from the different taluks of the Kistna and Godāvari districts to this village in summer; while 200 to 225 go from the village itself. These people settle in the fields in the three summer months during which the fields lie waste, and draw toddy from 5 to 10 a.m. and 3 to 7 p.m. They have to climb the tree and suspend pots, lined with lime, beneath the cut ends of the stalks of the fronds of the palm from which the juice (toddy) flows. But for the lime the toddy would immediately begin to ferment. The women at home boil the toddy till it is condensed into jaggery.

Part of the jaggery is sold to the direct agents of Messrs. Parry & Co., who have opened an extensive business in these parts and invested a large capital. These agents of the company purchase jaggery with the company's money and get a commission at the rate of As. 2-6 per bag. They send it to Samalkot, where the company converts it into sugar.

The remainder is sold by the tappers to private capitalists and retail traders, who purchase the jaggery in the fields and sell it again to the company's agent in the village. They receive no commission, but make a profit in three ways: (1) There is a difference in the cost per candy between the prices in the fields (i.e., near the tappers' huts) and in the village. (2) The traders lend money to the tappers in times of need and get "Jattis" executed, promises by which the tappers agree to repay the money in the shape of jaggery

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438 at a reduced price, generally 13 to 15 rupees per candy, while the market price in summer will be Rs. 23 to 29 per candy. Last year, 249 owing to the appearance of a competing company, Messrs. Simpson & Co., the price was Rs. 35 to 42 per candy. No interest is charged for such debts. (3) They invariably use false stones in weighing the jaggery in the fields, while in the village the company's stones are used. This results in an enormous profit.

With these three sources of profit, the private capitalist is able to realize a profit of Rs. 5 at least per cart (of 8 bags) while daily he sends 3 carts at least to the company's agent. The total export of the village during the summer will be from 17,000 to 20,000 bags; this year (1917) it is 18,000 bags, i.e., 6,000 candies.

556 The rich capitalist makes the largest profit out of this[1] trade. Many of the villagers are now a class of capitalists, great or small. Many that were poor three or four years ago are now able to invest a few hundreds and start independent businesses in this line. There are three people who invested about Rs. 30,000 each this year.

465 The toddy tappers are not materially better off. As a class they are only a little above the level of absolute poverty, while individually, there are only four or five who own a property of Rs. 500. Though their gross earnings are from Rs. 20 to 25 for the three months, the net income will be Rs. 6 to 8 only.

The village barber and washerman earn at least Rs. 30 to 35 during the three months. The lime dealer earns 50 to 60 rupees. The Pariahs who carry firewood get wages at the rate of 4 annas to 6 annas per day. Owners of carts get rent at the rate of Rs. 2 per turn to carry jaggery from the field-huts to Nidadavolu, the headquarters of the company. Makers of tin-pots, used in boiling the toddy, get 100 to 150 rupees. Pariah women prepare baskets of palmyra leaves to hold the jaggery, for which they are paid Re. 1 per 100. Brahmans are employed to prepare the accounts and are paid Rs. 10 per mensem.

Besides these payments for services rendered (which are in the shape of jaggery in most cases) there are certain extra perquisites or "mamuls" which the toddy tapper is compelled to pay. These illegitimate exactions mount up to thousands of rupees. The village servants also get presents, while the coolies are profited by carrying [545] rice or other articles to the fields. There are many small shops opened by retail traders in the fields themselves for the benefit of the tappers; while the performance of two or three dramas, based on some popular mythological story by country actors is not of rare occurrence.

464 The effects on the village are innumerable and many sided. One of the greatest difficulties for the Indian labourer is want of proper employment; it is no exaggeration to say that many families are reduced to poverty, simply for want of sufficient local demand for their labour. This village is to a certain extent relieved of this anxiety during a season when, the fields being fallow, they have no agricultural occupation to attend to. Many a poor family would have long ago left the village but for this attraction. Industrially, it has raised the efficiency of every craft, by providing it with more work to turn out. While in all the other seasons the whole village is entirely agricultural in character, in summer it can be said to be industrial and commercial in tone.

[1] [i.e., jaggery. -- Analyst]